

“Herod Resolves to Murder the Children in Bethlehem”

(Mary of Agreda)

672. Herod, that wicked king in Jerusalem was waiting for the message of the Magi concerning the newly born King of the Jews. But when Herod was informed of Magi departure on a different route, he realized his plan had failed. He consulted again some of the experts as to their interpretation of the Scriptures concerning Bethlehem. Herod ordered a strict search to be made for our Queen, Her Child and the glorious saint Joseph. But the Lord, who had commanded their flight from Jerusalem in the night, also hid them on their journey, so that there was none that knew any thing of it. Not being able to find Them, and no one having any knowledge of Them, the soldiers of Herod brought back the answer to him they could be found.

673. This angered him and increased his worries. The devil, who knew Herod to be ready for any wickedness, stirred up in his heart the thought of using his royal power to murder all the children under two years of age around Bethlehem. For in that way the King of the Jews, recently born there, might be murdered among them. Being so evil, he was highly satisfied with this plan. He set about executing all this without any of thought of the horror. Thus Herod ordered some troops to be gathered in that region and privately ordered some of his most loyal officers under the treat of death to kill all

the boy children under two years of age in Bethlehem and its vicinity. These wicked soldiers executed Herod's plan and the whole country was filled with extreme wailing and grief.

Mt 2:16 Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, was in a furious rage, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time which he had ascertained from the wise men.

2:17 Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah:

2:18 “A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they were no more.”

674. This command of Herod was placed into action six months after the birth of the Savior. When the murders began the great Queen was holding Her divine Son, lost in contemplation of His most holy Soul. She saw all that passed in Bethlehem just as clearly as if She Herself had been present to hear the wailing of the children and the parents. She saw also how Her Son prayed to His eternal Father for the parents of these innocents. He offered up the murdered children as the first fruits of His own Death. Jesus gained through prayer a miracle for these slaughter boys. *Each*

child gain the use of reason, in order that they might be a willing sacrifice for their Redeemer and accept their death for His glory. Thus He would be able to reward them with the crowns of martyrdom for what they suffered. All this the eternal Father granted. This was made known to the Queen as She looked into the Soul of Jesus. She joined Him in His prayers and sacrifices. She also had great sorrow for the parents of the martyred infants. She, indeed, was the first and true Rachel weeping for the children in Bethlehem

Jer 31:15 Thus says the LORD: “A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping. Rachel is weeping for her children; she refuses to be comforted for her children, because they are not.”

No mother could match the sorrow of our Holy Mother. God had created Her in such away that Mary's grief was the deepest possible.

675. Mary however did not know the condition of saint Elisabeth or her son John the Baptist. Although She understood the Scriptures concerning John, but She was uncertain of their current condition. The sweetest Mother did not relieve Her troubles about this by asking Her Son. *On account of the virtue of prudence in regard to such revelations She counted Herself as unworthy and as dust in the sight of the Lord.* But the Almighty took notice of Her loving and compassionate desires and informed Her that Zachary, the father of saint John, had died four months after the birth of Jesus. The widowed saint Elisabeth now had no other company

than that of her son John, with whom she was passing the days of her widowhood in a secluded place. For on account of the warning of the Angel, and knowing of the cruel heart of Herod, she had resolved to flee to the desert with her child and live there in the company of wild beasts rather than within the dangerous reach of Herod. This decision she had taken after her prayers guided her to this plan. She was now hidden in a cave or cleft of the rock where, with great hardship and difficulty.

676. Saint Elisabeth, after three years of this desert life, died in the Lord. John the Baptist remained in the desert until he should be commanded by the Almighty to go out and prepare the people for Jesus.

Filled with joy of knowing Elisabeth and her son John were safe and also compassion for them because they were isolated in the desert, Mary asked Her most holy Son permission to send Her holy Angels to visit them. Through them Mary sent them food and clothing. Through Her messengers the Angels relayed messages back and forth. When the last hour of Elisabeth arrived, Mary sent her a great number of Angels to assist her and her child, who was then four years old. These Angels also helped saint John to bury his mother in the desert. After Elisabeth death Mary sent John food each day until he was of old enough to provide for himself.

Mk 1:6 Now John was clothed with camel's hair, and had a leather girdle around his waist, and ate locusts and wild honey.

677. All the boy children killed by Herod, ages 2 years old and younger, even as young as 8 days, had the use of their reason. They all received a high knowledge of the being of God. Because of this knowledge these children performed heroic acts of faith, worship, and love of God, reverence and compassion for their parents. They prayed for their parents. In reward the children obtained for their fathers and mothers light and grace so they could advance on a spiritual journey. The children willingly agreed to martyrdom, in spite of the tenderness of their age, which made their sufferings so much the greater. A multitude of Angels assisted them and carried them to limbo, to the "bosom of Abraham". By their arrival they rejoiced with the inhabitants of limbo and reminded them that they would be liberated soon because the Messiah was in the world. All this occurred because of the prayers of the divine Child and His Mother. Aware of all this, Mary was inflamed with praise, "Praise the Lord, all you children; praise the Author of these great works, so worthy of God's Goodness and power." Mary appreciated all these events properly because of Her humility. For though She was the Mother of innocence, purity and sanctity, She humiliated Herself more because men are held back by their sins. Holy Mary reached a degree of humility on a level no other man could ever do. For She alone comprehended fully how insufficient is the return man can make for all the blessings flowing from God. Humility is always required for an act to be worthy in God's sight. She reached the height of

all perfection by making all Her acts serve as a grateful return for benefits received.

678.

Words of enlightenment from Mother Mary.

679. My daughter, the greatest difficulty in practicing virtue consists in dying to all that is pleasurable to the senses. You can not be a fit instrument in the Hands of the Lord, such as He desires if you not cleanse your life even of the images of all men. I wish it to be a law that all things, except God, His Angels and saints, do not exist. These should be your only possession. On this account the Lord has opened to you His secrets and honors you with His intimacy. For this purpose also do I honor you with Mine, that you wish only to live in the Lord.